

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /079 W  
-----083617 131107Z /16  
R 121452Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5817

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3952

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ELAB, MARR, GR  
SUBJECT: PAE WORK PERMIT

REF: STATE 119099

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN THE PAST WEEK, AN EMBOFF HAS DISCUSSED  
PACIFIC ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS (PAE) EMPLOYEES' WORK PERMIT  
PROBLEMS WITH THE RESPONSIBLE LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN ATHENS  
AND IRAKLION. AS A RESULT, PROCESSING OF WORK PERMIT APPLICATIONS  
IN IRAKLION MAY BE SPEEDED UP; HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED  
THAT THE LABOR MINISTRY DOES NOT RECOGNIZE AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP  
AS A VALID CRITERION IN JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR "KEY" POSITIONS. WE  
WILL FOLLOW UP WITH THE MFA PER THE REFTEL ON MAY 15. END SUMMARY.

2. AN EMBOFF VISITED IRAKLION ON MAY 5 EXPRESSLY TO LOOK INTO THE  
PROBLEM OF DELAYS IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR PAE EMPLOYEES'  
WORK PERMITS WITH THE PAE SITE MANAGER AND LOCAL LABOR MINISTRY  
OFFICIALS. USING THE APPLICATION OF THE ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF AS  
A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, EMBOFF DISCUSSED THE SITUATION WITH THE  
DIRECTOR OF THE EMPLOYMENT OFFICE WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
CERTIFYING THE NON-AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED, UNEMPLOYED GREEK  
NATIONALS BEFORE ALIENS ARE ISSUED WORK PERMITS. EMBOFF PRESSED  
FOR AN EXPLANATION CONCERNING BOTH THE THREE-MONTH DELAY IN  
PROCESSING THE APPLICATION AND THE APPARENT DISREGARD OF THE  
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CRITERIA SET FORTH IN THE ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF'S POSITION DES-  
CRIPTION. THE ONLY CANDIDATE RECOMMENDED BY THE EMPLOYMENT  
OFFICE HAD NO FIRE FIGHTING EXPERIENCE AND WAS NOT AN AMERICAN  
CITIZEN. THE DIRECTOR ADMITTED THAT LOCAL POLITICAL PRESSURES  
HAD BEEN ONE FACTOR IN THE DELAY. HE ALSO STATED THAT SINCE  
GREEK LABOR LAW DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE REQUIREMENT FOR AMERICAN  
CITIZENS TO OCCUPY "KEY" POSITIONS, HE WOULD COMPLY WITH THE

REQUEST ONLY ON WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE LABOR MINISTRY.

3. THE EMBOFF FOLLOWED UP THIS DISCUSSION DURING A CALL ON THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LABOR MINISTRY ON MAY 10. THE SECRETARY GENERAL EXPRESSED SOME ANNOYANCE WITH THE LOCAL OFFICIALS IN IRAKLION FOR DELAYING THE PROCESSING OF PAE APPLICATIONS. HE SAID NO MORE THAN A WEEK SHOULD NORMALLY BE NECESSARY AND ADDED HE WOULD INSTRUCT THE EMPLOYMENT OFFICE IN IRAKLION TO WORK WITHIN THAT TIME LIMIT. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE DIRECTOR HAD BEEN CORRECT IN HIS INTERPRETATION OF GREEK LAW REGARDING AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP BEING AN UNACCEPTABLE PREREQUISITE FOR FILLING "KEY" POSITIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OFFERED TO INSTRUCT THE DIRECTOR TO RECOGNIZE THIS CRITERION IF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WOULD CERTIFY THAT THE U.S. FORCES ARE ENTITLED TO SUCH A RIGHT UNDER EXISTING BILATERAL AGREEMENTS.

4. OUR NEXT STOP ON THIS ISSUE IS THE MFA WHEN THE OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR PAE MATTERS RETURNS ON MAY 15.

5. THE EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT ON THE VIABILITY OF CONVERTING THE BASE MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS AT HELLENIKON AND IRAKLION FROM A CONTRACTOR TO AN IN-HOUSE OPERATION WILL BE INCLUDED IN OUR REPORT OF THE MFA'S RESPONSE TO THE RATIONALE PROVIDED IN PARAS 2 AND 3 OF THE REFTEL.  
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## Message Attributes

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